

OFFICE OF

DATE: 8 May 1974

TO:

FROM:

MAGID

SUBJECT: Communications Within the DDI

ACTION

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Communications problems are at the heart of many of the topics that MAGID addresses. Earlier papers contained related recommendations. Forthcoming studies on grievances, counseling, training, etc., also will touch upon similar concerns.

MAGID is realistic enough to realize that some communications problems are unsolvable or perennial and idealistic enough to believe that improvements can and should be made. We sometimes are surprised ourselves to discover the extent of communications failures. For example, remember the MAGID luncheon with O/DDI in March when Messrs. Proctor and Walsh told us about the security violations and lapses in judgment committed by two DDI overseas travelers. We were told that these concerns were earlier that same day

communicated at the Executive Council and that the Office and Staff chiefs were asked to transmit to all troops the nature and extent of DDI concern. At several subsequent meetings, MAGID informally polled its membership regarding this matter. Several of us never "got" the word through office channels; others received some message, but one obviously distorted from that which we had heard first-hand.

→ I am not surprised! The distortion/abstraction factor is very high. B.C.

MAGID-8

8 May 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT : MAGID Study of Communications Within
the DDI

Introduction

1. Inadequate communications within the DDI (and the Agency at large) has long been a cause of confusion and disgruntlement among DDI personnel.* The problem has been exacerbated by the recent history of the Agency. There is a residue of uncertainty and distrust from the Schlesinger era and greater concern about the unknown future. Even more than usual, people want candid and forthright information from frank and forthright bosses. We acknowledge the considerable improvement in downward communication in recent months through the increased use of administrative memos, efforts by some office chiefs to circulate occasionally among subordinate branches, and various office and agency "town meetings."

2. Nonetheless, the problem has not been adequately resolved, and much information that is legitimately of general employee interest is not filtering down through the ranks in a systematic and uniform manner. The grapevine fills some of the gap, but often with half-truths or totally erroneous gossip that leads to unjustified and unnecessary concerns. MAGID has tried to briefly identify some kinds of information that we believe should be made regularly available and to suggest ways that this can be done.

* A particular problem exists for DDI offices located away from headquarters. Information is often slow in reaching our "off-campus" personnel, who feel especially isolated from the mainstream of Agency developments.

3. Most DDI employees -- as a matter of principle -- want to see as much information as possible about the Agency and where it is going. They want to know more about their directorate, office and division, and about anything that might affect their career opportunities. While there might not be a strict "need to know" regarding some of this material, the fullest possible exchange is an essential factor in encouraging esprit de corps. Employees want to feel that they are a real part of what is happening.

Findings

4. A common complaint among DDI personnel is that there is a lack of uniformity in the information that is transmitted downward in the DDI. Section and branch meetings are not always adequate conduits of information, even when senior management has directed that specific information be passed along. Such messages sometimes fall by the wayside; more often, different components will receive widely varying versions of the original communication. Formal notices avoid the inevitable distortions of repeated oral transmissions, although, on occasion, an ambiguous memo will raise more questions than it answers.

5. Even written notices do not always reach all personnel, however. Frequently, they are held up in front offices or diverted to general reading tables, and subsequently are missed by many employees. Three DDI offices -- CRS, FBIS, and IAS -- have attempted to deal with this problem by circulating the minutes of the weekly office staff meetings to all their personnel. In addition to this procedure, these offices have encouraged their personnel to respond to topics discussed at these meetings. These procedures clearly have helped internal communications.

6. The lack of information on general personnel matters -- promotions, transfers, resignations and retirements -- provokes particular complaint among DDI personnel. Only two offices, CRS and FBIS, have taken steps to provide such information. CRS's Administrative

Staff circulates a monthly "Personnel Happenings" sheet which lists all promotions, transfers, and resignations within the office during the previous month. FBIS publishes a monthly newsletter which includes this information and other developments of interest to its personnel.

7. We also found dissatisfaction with the lack of contact with management above one's office level. Indeed, some personnel complained about the lack of contact above their division or even branch level. OSR, OER, FBIS, IAS, and CRS have tried to broaden contacts for their office personnel by arranging occasional ad hoc conferences [redacted]

[redacted] There opportunities are provided for discussions with the office director, and, in a few cases, with other senior people such as the DDI, the Director of Personnel, etc. Participants at these conferences have been enthusiastic about their merit, but the use of such sessions has been limited. Other approaches have been tried (e.g., OBGI coffee hours); all are helpful. None of these efforts touch many people much of the time.

8. Information on opportunities for special schooling, a year at university under a variety of existing programs, Congressional and White House Fellowships, and the like, is not widely circulated. Most people seem to hear about such programs by accident, from friends or acquaintances who have gotten such assignments. There is general ignorance and confusion as to application procedures, professional requirements, deadlines for applications, etc. Selection often appears haphazard or arbitrary, rather than well publicized and open to competition by all.

Recommendations

A. Each DDI office should make a greater effort to keep all of its personnel abreast of substantive and organizational developments of legitimate interest to them. While smaller offices may be able to do this verbally in regular staff meetings, larger offices should consider circulating written minutes (sanitized when necessary) of the regular office staff meetings and DDI Executive Council staff meetings. We recognize that passing paper takes time, that the information sometimes has less impact than when communicated orally,

Proctor
and that useful nuances may be lost. The most effective balance is not easily defined, but we believe that the formal notice does provide better insurance of specific information reaching the troops. In any event, oral communications of routine matters should be improved. We believe it would be helpful if Mr. Proctor issued a memo describing his expectations regarding communications (e.g., of Executive Council deliberations, etc.).
Responsibility: O/DDI, Office and Staff Chiefs.

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How?
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B. Office and Division chiefs should make a more concerted effort to circulate among the troops. They should consider periodic lunches with a few indians, a la Colby/DDI/ADDI style. In addition, personnel in all offices should have an opportunity to meet with the DDI or ADDI at least once a year. Other individuals particularly knowledgeable on subjects of topical interest could also address the group at that time. Such meetings need not be held [] although the informal and congenial atmosphere of this kind of "seminar" can be beneficial. Meetings at headquarters would probably be more convenient for many offices and would give more people a chance to attend.
Responsibility: Office and Staff Chiefs, DDI Management Staff.

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C. The Intelligence Directorate should issue a monthly or bimonthly newsletter that includes the following:

- md*
1. a promotion list, similar to those issued by the Foreign Service; (There is disagreement among MAGID members on this point. We offer it as a tentative suggestion for consideration by each office director.)
- md*
2. notice of transfers and other new assignments;
- md*
3. news of office reorganizations, new offices, new facilities and services now available;
- md*
4. reminders of deadlines for application for training programs, schooling and fellowships, along with application procedures and requirements for nominees;

5. a note from the DDI (or the Director, or any senior management figure who wishes to use this vehicle) on any special subject he wants to get across to the troops;
6. space for a selection of letters to the editors from DDI personnel.

Such a newsletter could be helpful in several respects. Whereas the variety of ad hoc notices now issued can slip by unnoticed and unread, a regularly scheduled newsletter would be looked for by all DDI personnel. The journeyman would have an assured source of certain types of information, and the DDI management could be fairly certain that its messages were widely read and were received in untarnished form.

Responsibility: DDI Management Staff

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